(c) what was the impact of such sudden slump in software exports on our domestic market; and

(d) the efforts taken by Government to improve software exports?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN): (a) to (d) No, Sir. The software and services exports from India generated revenue of Rs. 9,100 crore in the third quarter (October-December) of 2001-2002, as compared to Rs. 7270 crore for the corresponding period in the previous year, with a rise of 25%.

Telephone services by BSNL in rural areas

†2631. SHRI JANESHWAR MISHRA: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government have provided an amount of Rs. 800 crore to BSNL which is providing telephone service in rural areas, for not completing the work;

(b) if so, the reasons thereof;

(c) the measures being taken by Government to connect rural areas with telecommunication service and to provide better service; and

(d) the part of population of the country, connected with the telephone facilities, so far togetherwith the areas still deprived of it?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI TAPAN SIKDAR): (a) and (b) An amount of Rs. 2300 crores representing licence fee has been reimbursed to BSNL for providing telephone services in rural areas. In addition, a requirement of Rs. 1100 crores for VPTs was projected in 2001-2002. However, only Rs. 720 crores have been accepted by the Planning Commission towards the budgetary support.

---

†Original notice of the Question was received in Hindi.

(c) The Government of India has initiated schemes to connect villages and to provide better services. Out of a total of 6,07,491 villages in the country, about 4,68,862 villages are already provided village public telephones. New technology like Wireless in Local Loop (WLL) are also being introduced in rural areas. In addition, all exchanges are being connected with reliable media for providing better service.

(d) More than 4 out of 100 people in the country are having telephone (teledensity is around 4.36% as of March 31, 2002). Telecom facilities have been provided to Headquarters of all Revenues Districts, Sub-Divisions, Tehsils and Blocks. STD facility has also been provided to all 594 District Headquarters, 1199 Sub-Divisions (out of 1213), 2883 Tehsil Headquarters (out of 2928), 5945 Block Headquarters (out of 6054). Some very remote areas which require satellite based or other sophisticated telecommunication media have not yet been provided. The ongoing VPT programme proposes to cover all villages including remote locations by December 2002.

Growth in IT Enabled Services

2632. SHRI K.B. KRISHNA MURTHY: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Information Technology services are set to register growth in the current fiscal year and if so, to what extent;

(b) whether according to NASSCOM there would be a projected shortage of qualified Information Technology professionals in 2004-2005 with demand peaking at 14,08,000 and supply lagging behind at 8,75,000;

(c) whether out of 1.6 lakh engineers who qualify every year in Information Technology field, only less than 2 per cent come from premier Information Technology Institutions; and

(d) if so, whether Government would strengthen the Information